



How Ewing Elementary Teachers Intentionally Plan for Student Growth

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At Ewing Elementary in Fleming County, academic success does not happen by chance. The school's recent label as a School of Distinction/High Progress School, although celebrated, only reinforces what teachers, parents, school staff, and administrators believe about the quality of teaching and learning.

As the new principal of Ewing Elementary, Michelle Hunt stood before her staff on August 24th, 2015. Her goal was to establish a culture in which professional and student growth was normal practice.¹

"Before we can expect *our students* to embrace a culture of continuous improvement, **we** must embrace and model a culture of continuous improvement," Hunt said, referencing the growth mindset research of Carol Dweck. Hunt facilitated a conversation in which teachers reflected on their Student Voice Survey results and current challenges of their students to inform their professional growth plans for the upcoming school year. The conversations revealed the importance of timely data. Although the Student Voice Survey results provided relevant information, teachers realized that they had to explore ways to incorporate student voice into their *daily* practice.

In the following months, teachers focused on planning lessons and assessments that provided evidence of student learning.

As Dylan Wiliam states in his text *Embedding Formative Assessment: Practical Techniques for K-12 Classrooms*, "Evidence about student learning doesn't just present itself to the teacher, it has to be sought, and teachers have to know what to look for." (2015, p. 64)

In addition, once there is evidence of student learning, a reaction is required from the teacher in the form of lesson design, adjustment, and individual student support.²

That year, Ewing educators decided to scrap traditional lesson plans. In the past, their plans tended to contain a fixed sequence of instructional activities that too often marched through the content regardless of student learning.

Teachers now gather daily evidence of student learning to inform next steps³ using the *Ewing Elementary Weekly Lessons and Reflections* form, in lieu of turning in lesson plans. Not surprisingly, teachers welcomed the change. Third grade teacher Lisa DeHart states, "This (protocol) allows me to reflect on student learning of the content and how to move forward with instruction rather than planning for a series of lessons."

Formative assessments provide data that drives instruction forward for both whole group and small group learning. Analyzing the data with students gives them a deeper understanding of where they are in the student growth process. Students can't understand how they need to improve if they don't know where they are in relation to their academic goals.

Kim Shannon, 6th Grade teacher

Another teacher echoes the sentiment that intentional reflection of student learning informs next steps, especially for differentiation in the classroom.

Teacher: _____ Module: _____ Date: _____ Subject: _____

EWING ELEMENTARY WEEKLY LESSONS AND REFLECTION

	% Mastery	Plus/Delta	Differentiation
MONDAY Standard: 3.OA.1 Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson 1-Equal Groups with Multiplication Modified four corners activity TPS Smartboard Activity 	Formative/Summative: Hinge Questions 85%	+ Students were very sound in repeated addition. Showed prior knowledge Strategies carried over from second grade Decomposing of numbers was the most used strategy among the class	▲ They could do repeated addition, but to look at the equal groups and do the multiplication sentence was a struggle for them Zack Christine *Reinforce this lesson, lesson 2 is an extension so I will navigate to these three for additional support.
TUESDAY Standard: Activity:	Formative/Summative:		
WEDNESDAY Standard: Activity:	Formative/Summative:		
THURSDAY Standard: Activity:	Formative/Summative:		

“Using a variety of student data to drive instruction is an essential part of our everyday learning. I track student data and determine whole class mastery of content and also individual student progress. By viewing data this way, I can determine my next steps as well as individualize instruction to fit the needs for all my students. Those students who do not meet mastery receive small group instruction through both time dedicated for RTI and in-class differentiation. The process does not end here. Students track their own data through various assessments in their data folder. Through collaboration with me, each student designs a plan that will allow them to achieve academic success.”

Samantha Franke, 4th Grade Teacher

1. As a result of the drastic changes that teachers implemented, Ewing Elementary experienced a 22.9 point increase in overall accountability performance from 2014-15 to 2015-16. Over the next few months, the *Educator Development Newsletter* will follow Ewing Elementary’s journey through a series of articles featuring steps teachers and staff have made toward applying assessment strategies and protocols and the effect these are having on student growth. See [Principal Performance Standard 1](#)
2. See Domain 1, [Kentucky Framework for Teaching](#)
3. See Domain 3, Component D, [Kentucky Framework for Teaching](#)

William, D. (2015). Embedding Formative Assessment: Practical Techniques for K-12 Classrooms. Learning Sciences International, P. 64.